

Little Maura

by L.S Jay

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Summary: When leaving everything behind is the only way to heal, breaking hearts is an unavoidable outcome.. Maura telling the story six years later and Jane telling her own. Give it a try :)

## 1. Chapter 1

\*\*Hey guys! This's my first story in English. Well, even in my mother language I only write short stories on my blog, so that makes it my first multi-chapters story ever! ( my story "the pathologist" doesn't count.. I found it's too ambitious from me to write such a story for the time being)\*\*

\*\*Anyway, this's a story inside of a story told from Maura's POV, talking about love, friendship and family.. There is angst, drama, romance and so much more..\*\*

\*\*This is Not Rizzoli&isles/Grey's Anatomy cross over... I just needed a hospital in some city other than Boston, it would only make a sense to use one I already know..\*\*

\*\*Any error or mistake is mine. I tried to be as thorough as possible.. You can only imagine how difficult it is to write in your 4th language! \*\*

\*\*Please if there is any advice, remark or critique feel free to leave a review or contact me.. I really hope someone will like the story enough to beta-read the upcoming chapter(s).\*\*

\*\*That will be all for now.. Enjoy!\*\*

\*\*L.S\*\*

"Happy birthday mama! I love you"

I heard my five years old son James say sweetly. He was looking up at me with so much love in his beautiful hazel eyes, it almost brought

me to tears. I was loved that much once before. She used to look at me the same way; like I'm the sun and the moon and every star in between. Did she drown in the darkness when I left? Or had she found someone else who lights up her life now? Does she look at them the same way? I would never know. Part of me hopes so, so all the pain we both endured wouldn't be in vain. The other part still aches as though those six years had never passed. She is nowhere near me and yet She is everywhere. I see her in the morning coffee, burger commercials, baseball games, little black dresses, Italian films, my daily glass of wine, my reflection in the mirror.. I even see her in my son who looks nothing like her!

"Mama! Are you ok?" James's voice took me out of the reverie I often find myself trapped in.

"Wha.. Yes I'm fine. Why?"

" you have tears in you face.. Are you sad again?" He reached out to touch my face which was was a way out of his reach. I bent down to meet him half way. His touch was so soft it made me close my eyes. Few more tears made their way down my cheeks in the process. I wasn't even aware I was crying until he pointed it out. I usually make sure he was nowhere around me when I let the reins of my emotions slip out of my hands, but some days were harder than others. Some days I just miss her so much that I can't even breath.

I opened my eyes to find his shut. He kept moving his thumbs up and down my cheeks with closed eyes as if he was trying to wash away my sadness. God, if touches could heal! Does she have someone to wipe away her tears?

"Oh.. No darling, I'm not sad. I'm just little bit emotional at this moment." It gets easier and easier every time I tell the lie. I had to convince my mind that it's an absolute truth so I wouldn't break into hives every single time. I wiped my face dry and forced a weak smile to look more convincing, which did the trick. "Don't worry about me sweet boy.. I just love you so, so much and I'm so grateful to have you in my life. You know that, right?"

" Yes I do" He answered my rhetorical question enthusiastically that I had to chuckle a little bit.. My boy tends to be a tad literal like his mama. "Big Jay said that a mother always loves her child no matter what, even before their birth. It means you loved me longer than I loved you, That's why I should be a good boy so I can make it up to you." He finished beaming with pride of what he just said, and I just stared at him astonished for a moment until a thought occurred to me.

"Who's Big Jay?" I asked.

"I told you about Jayden's.. Oh I forgot you present in my room. May I go upstairs to bring it?"

" yes, you may" I permitted feeling puzzled over the sudden change of subject, but I had to smile at his persistence to use a proper language.

He came back a minute later with a haphazardly wrapped cylindrical object in his hands.

"I made you thisâ€¦ I hope you'd like" He handed it to me with a hopeful smile gracing his handsome features. He looked so cute biting his lower lip in anticipation, just like \_she\_ used to do. And just like I used to do with \_her\_, I kissed him and brought him to my lap to shower him with even more kisses.

"Of course I will like it, it's from you! And It's so sweet of you to make it sweetheart" I gave him one more kiss before I start unwrapping the gift. "Here we go.."

Under the red wrapper It was a simple coffee mug with a childish drawing of what it supposed to be a blond-haired woman holding hands with a small child. Under it was written 'Mama & Mini Jay'.

"Oh it so beautiful honey.. Did you draw it ?" I gushed with teary eyes hugging him tightly.

"Yes.. The woman is you and the boy is me.. Turn it around"

I did as I was told, only to find three sentences in James's handwriting :

**\*\*You are the best mama in the whole universe\*\***

**\*\*You are my best friend\*\***

**\*\*You are my 'little Maura'\*\***

**\*\*M.J\*\***

I was at lost of what to do or say, it was my very first gift from James.. I wasn't used to such sweet gestures even after years full of them. The years I spent with \_her\_. \_She\_ used to blame the way I grew up deprived of affections and kindness that wasn't coming from my nannies and teachers out of pity or obligation. Every time I stood speechless over the slightest sweet thing \_she\_ had done for me, \_she\_ would start cursing my parents who benignly neglected me and my classmates who bullied me for being different, and every lover who didn't bother to see past my physical attributes and my bank accounts to really see me.. And then \_she\_ would take me in \_her\_ arms until I rein my emotions whispering how much \_she\_ loved me and how much \_she\_ was grateful for my mere existence in this world.

And there was my son with the same look, taking after her to show me that I still am worthy of love. To him, I'm the best person in the world, I do no wrong. In his innocent eyes I'm a saint. Does a child love their mother no matter what? Even if she broke someone's heart? I hope so.

I look at my new precious treasure one more time before hugging James once more â€" grateful he liked to be hugged unlike her- and spoke softly into his ear..

"and you â€"my dear- are the perfect son, thank so much you for the mug.. I promise to use it every day, but I have a question: what do you mean by 'little Maura?'"

"Oh it's the main character in the story Big Jay tells us in the hospital nursery.. She said that every one deserves to have their 'little Maura'.. And you are mine" he explained smiling at me. Could

his smile get any sweeter!

"Oh that's so sweet, I'm honored to be that for you.. Remind me who's this Big Jay person again?" I inquired curiously.

" I told you about her before. Remember my new friend Jayden?"

" isn't he the boy whom you found crying in the hallways because his mother was badly hurt?" I still remember that day, about two weeks ago, when I picked a red-eyed James from the nursery. He spent the ride home telling me the story of the crying kid he met in hallways. Despite the unfortunate circumstances, I found it quite sweet that my little boy got emotional over someone else's misfortune, starting to show sympathy in his early age.

" yes, both his mothers were hurt.. his mommy Alice is still asleep. Big Jay is his other mother. She is ok now, but she leaves him with us in the nursery because she and his uncle Adam have to work.. They come to the hospital every day to see Alice and Emma.. Emma is Jayden little sister.. She's so small and red.. She was purple before.. She lives in a glasslike box because she is sick.." At that point I knew my son started digressing as usual while being excited about something..

" okay then.." I cut him off before he starts describing every member in his friend's family tree. "So Big Jay is Jayden's mother, Alice is his other mother, Adam is his uncle and Emma is his newborn sister. Alright.. So tell me; Why do you call her Big Jay?"

"It's her nickname mama" he said with a 'duh' expression in his face I couldn't help but laugh ."She is Big Jay , Jayden is Little Jay, I'm Mini jay, Zola in Zu, Sofia is Sofy, Bailey is Baiy, Emma is Em.."

And he kept going on and on until the last name, while I had no idea who the half of kids are and what their parents do in the hospital. What intrigued me was the fact that he never liked the nursery or talk about it. He was such a shy kid. never one to initiate a conversation with his peers or gets zealous about the play dates. He was so quit and reserved with other children. I was always afraid he would become a mini version of me And have the same dreadful childhood. Listening to him talking animatedly about the other kids as though they were his friends for years was quite refreshing.

"Well that's interesting mini Jay" I noticed his face lit up upon hearing the nickname, so I carried on " would you like me call you Jay from now on?"

"Yes please Mama" it always amazed me how much James and I had in common; a simple thing like a nickname could make us so happy!

"ok Jay, now tell me what the story is about "

" the story named 'little Maura'. It's about a little girl who lived in a small town. She was so different from all the kid in there that no one want to be her friend. No one understood her, not even her parents.. One day she woke up and found this little girl about her age, in her room. Little Maura asked her about her name and what she was doing in the room and how she got in there, but the other girl

couldn't answer her because she couldn't remember anything about herself.. little Maura soon found that no one, other than herself, can see the other girl, that's why her parents and the kids at school didn't believe her when she told them about her friend and started making fun of her and calling her liar. One day little Maura decided she wants to prove that Alice, that was the name they agreed to call the other girl, is not imaginary. So they started thinking about a way to prove everyone wrong. And then Alice told Little Maura that the only way to do that is to find Alice physical self and that's how they started their journey to find the real Alice. It's little Jay's favorite bedtime story.. That day when I found him in hallways, he was crying because he wanted to sleep in Big Jay's room so she cloud tell him the story but that was not allowed so she had this idea. she would tell him the story -before his uncle takes him home- to record it in his phone so he can listen to it before sleep.. When I asked her if I could record it too she said yes and decided to start it from the beginning.. I too listen to them after my sitter tucks me in bed when you work late"

While James kept talking about the story I found myself feeling uneasy, and too destructed to feel guilty about missing his bedtime too often lately. Could it be a coincidence? The same name, the same childhood story, and this jay person.. Could she be.. No.

"Ok Honey.. Mama has a call to make .. Go read a book or watch TV before your bedtime."

After I made sure James was out of earshot, I picked my phone to make the call.

"Hey birthday girl.. You finally decided to go out with us ?" Came my friend's voice from the other end. Arizona Robins and I go way back to med school. We were more of acquaintances than friends back than, but we kept in touch during the years. She was the one who suggested my name for my current job in 'Grey-Sloan Memorial Hospital'. Since than we grew closer to become friends which makes sense, since we had so much in common; We both went through an emotionally and physically traumatic ordeal that changed our lives for good. We suffered losses that could have brought us to our knees, but somehow we managed to find a reason to move on with our lives, each in her own way.

"Hey Arizona.. no, I'm spending the evening with James.. I actually called to asked about a patient.. A woman James called Big Jay, apparently her wife is still in the hospital, comatose after giving birth to a little girl possibly prematurely. Do you know anything about her? Her name for a start?"

"Ah you mean Superwoman?" I could hear amusement in her tone.

"What?"

" your talking about the woman who tells the kids stories, right?"

" yes, James told me she tells them daily stories after visiting her wife and daughter"

"So you're talking about Superwoman" after not noticing any sign of acknowledgement from my part, she sighed in disbelief. "Come on Dorth, you must have heard about her"

"I can assure you I absolutely have no idea what you're talking about" I answered sincerely not understanding why should I know about the woman and her silly nickname. Superwoman! Really?!

"Oh God woman, sometimes I forgot we even work at the same hospital! You have to get out of that basement every now and then, see the daylight and the beautiful sun.. You know the sun right? The bright and shiny-.."

"Good grief Robins! It's not the time for your sarcasm.. Just answer the question!" Usually I would indulge in her teasing, but not at that moment when everything I'd built in the last six years could be at risk.

"Ok, fine.. But you really need to get a life outside that hole Dorth! Anyway, about two weeks ago, a woman burst into the ER carrying a very pregnant woman in her arms begging for help. Before the nurse could ask her anything about what happened, the woman suddenly collapsed. It turn out she was shot twice; in her left leg and right shoulder both through and through.."

"What?! How that even possible?!" My stomach knotted slightly. The familiarity of it all was unsettling at best.

"Yeah, you can say that again. How she managed to do it is beyond me. I mean.. she must have driven to the hospital, and at least carried her from the car to the ER.. Not to mention how she got her into the car in the first place.. God I'm dying to know what the hell happen to them?! The pregnant woman's injuries were consistent with being tortured. It was really horrible to witness Maura .. Thank God we were able to save the baby before it was too late.. The poor mother is still in coma, Shepherd said it's matter of time now, to see if she would ever wake up.. It's just so not fair you know" at that point Arizona started getting exasperated. "it somehow reminds me of how Callie and I almost lost Sofia.. That was horrible too.."

Oh No! not that accident anecdote again! if not stopped, Arizona could go on and on about how it wasn't her fault, and the truck that came out of nowhere and the agonizing waiting and the fight with the baby's father.. It was all too sad to hear it for the millionth time, and I wasn't really in the mood.

"Arizona, honey please focus!" I cut her off, rolling my eyes.

"Yeah right, sorry.. Well, you know now where the nickname came from, it's suitable right?.. Anyway, a couple of hours after we took them both to the OR, FBI agents showed up looking for them! And that's it"

"What's her name? the superwoman I mean" I could feel my heartbeat increasing with the passing second as I braced myself to hear the answer.

"Who knows! Their identity was kept secret for their safety; the Chief said.. They even put the whole damn wing on the watch.. Everywhere you turn there is black suits with stoic faces.. It's feels like an action movie of sort " she scoffed before she continued " All I know is that our Superwoman got herself discharged from the hospital AMA after only four days. She visits everyday though. we

think she's an FBI agent.. She has to be, I mean she comes and goes freely and I even saw her once wearing one of those cliché Fed's suits. It looked sexy on her though unlike her fellow male agents.. But than again when I ever found a man sexy?"

I could hear her laughing at her own joke and I found my laughter tagging along. However, the feeling of unease only increased tenfold with the new informations. Everything sounds too familiar for my liking.

" an FBI agent! Hmmm.. What does she look like? Can you describe her?" I asked crossing my fingers. So much for the atheist I am!

"Well, she's hot" she breathed and my eyes at that point started to hurt from the too many times I rolled them during the conversation.

"So God help me, Robins.. Can't you keep in your pants and be serious for once in you life?" I nearly yelled.

"Whoa.. What hair got up your ass Dorth? What is it with the third degree?!" Countered defensively.

"Please Arizona, can you just answer the question?!" I begged through my my gritted teeth. I could feel my patience wearing thin, but I didn't what her to pick on what was really going on my mind and start asking questions I wasn't ready to answer. Arizona was the only person here who knew about what happen six years ago, but not the whole story. She doesn't know about her. For all she cares, she was my best friend whom I lost contact with after I moved to Seattle.

" okey fine.. She's a brunette.. Late thirties.. Um.. very tall, super model kind of tall.. Slender, super model kind of slender.. Long black hair.. big dark brown eyes.. Toned body..To sum it up, she's sexy, super model kind of sexy" she chuckled a little, God knows the woman can't help herself even if her life depends on it! I could have laughed at her antics if I wasn't feeling sick all of a sudden.

"Okay thank you so much.. I apologize for my rudeness.. I just had a rough day" I managed to say desperate to end the conversation.

" Don't worry about it Isles.. Are you ok though? Do you want me to come over?" Arizona asked kindly, a hint of concern creeping into her voice. I could tell she started to sense that something was off.

"No, I'm fine just tired.. Thank for the offer though.. I'll see you tomorrow.. Goodnight" I hurried to hang up before the flood of questions starts.

Brunette.. Late thirties.. Tall.. Slender.. Black hair.. Big dark brown eyes.. Jay.. Little Maura .. Emma\_

No. It can't be her.. The woman is married with a son around James age.. She couldn't possibly move on, get married and have a child in a matter of months.. Could she? As far as I know, she has yet to sign the divorce papers my lawyer gave her years ago.

And there was the FBI agent part. I know she hates the Feds, she wouldn't leave BPD to work for them, would she?

And what on earth would she be doing here, in Seattle? And what's the odds she would end up in this hospital of all the places?

If it was really her, did she know I work there? Does she know who James is?

Too much questions with no answers. My head started to ache.

I hate not knowing, and I hate to guess or jump to conclusions even more. I had to know for sure who this mysterious woman is, but how?

The Records. I could almost feel the proverbial lightbulb lights up above my head. I recalled James talking about recording her stories. I would know if it was her from the voice.

"James" I forgot everything about his new nickname at that point.

"Yes Mama?" If he was disappointed that I didn't call him Jay he didn't show it.

"Do you still have the stories recorded in you phone? I would love to listen to them" I struggled to keep my voice light and steady.

"Yes mama.. Here" He handed me his cellphone, and went back to whatever kids show he was so engrossingly watching. I easily found the sound records, and randomly chose one. I went to play it,, but my fears got the better of me.

It can be her voice I'm about to hear; her beautiful husky deep voice I missed so much that I'm not sure I can handle hearing it again.

It can be someone else's voice, and all the similarities are just some sort of a sick joke the universe is playing on me. Would I be disappointed?

And what if it's really her?

During my mental debate, my left thumb grew a mind of its own and pressed 'play', startling me out of my deep thoughts. then I heard it.

"Ok kiddos, here we go with another adventure of Little Maura and her friend Alice.. "

For a split moment I thought my heart ceased to beat. Everything went still as if the planet itself stopped spinning only to have my head taking over that task a moment later.

"Oh My God.." A whisper slipped from between my quivering lips.

It's Jane.



**\*\*H\*\*\*\*ola amigos\*\*\*\*!** I'm so thrilled about how well-received the first chapter was. Thank you so much for you reviews, favorites and follows.. For your encouragements and your kind words. I hope this chapter and the upcoming ones will be up to your expectations.\*\*

**\*\*I must admit, writing this story in much more challenging that I expected, and I'm not only talking about the language thing. I mean..Moving back and forth between the stories is a tiring task. I said it was a story inside of a story, and boy was I wrong! It's a story inside of a story inside of a freaking story. I'm just glad you seem to like as much as I do :)\*\***

**\*\*We established in the first chapter that:\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*Maura has a five years old son named James.\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*She works at 'Grey-Sloan MH' in Seattle, Washington.\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*She left Boston six years ago after a life changing event.\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*She and Jane were married.\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*Jane has a wife and two children; a son and a newborn daughter. (Or does she?)\***

â€¢ **\*\*Jane has a story starring Little Maura.\*\***

â€¢ **\*\*And moreâ€|\*\***

**\*\*I think a warning is in order here. There are some serious stuff going on in this one.\*\***

**\*\*Every mistake or error is mine. I hope they are not too off-putting.\*\***

**\*\*Thanks for reading. Enjoy!\*\***

**\*\*I own few things in this world; Rizzoli&isles is not one them.\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p><em><strong>Run Maura.. Run!<strong>\_

\_I keep telling myself.\_

'\_If you can't fight, run as fast as you can' Jane told me once.\_

\_And run I do, willing my shaky legs to move forwards; running as though I'm chased by death itself. And I might be.\_

\_It's pitch dark in here, in the middle of nowhere. I don't know where I am, nor what I'm heading toward. All I know is that I have to run.\_

\_I continue to penetrate the thick fog aimlessly, not knowing what kind of dangers is lurking in the dreadful darkness of the night..\_

\_Every single muscle in my body aches. My heart's beating against my ribcage like it's trying to break free, pumping fear-filled blood into my veins; my adrenal glands are feeling so generous at this point. My lungs burn, and my breathing is getting labored by the passing second, but I keep going. My mind is racing like a maniac; **\*\*Do not stop!\*\*** And don't. I don't think I can, even if I want to. It feels like descending a never-ending hill in hell..\_

\_He's right behind me, I can tell. No matter how fast I run, I still can feel his sickening breath on my nape. I, nonetheless, will my drained body to move faster.\_

**\*\*Run, damn it!\*\***\_

\_I keep repeating the mantra religiously in my mind. I'm so tired and terrified like I've never been before. I feel like a helpless, lonely prey in the middle a heated chase. \_

**\*\*Maura! Where are you?!\*\***\_

\_Is that Jane's voice shouting my name? \_

\_Hearing anything over my loud breathing and my heartbeats that echo in my ears, is a real struggle.\_

**\*\*Maura!!\*\***\_

\_Yes, it's Jane. She keeps calling my name over and over like a possessed woman. She sounds so desperate, it nearly breaks my heart.\_

\_I want to scream; to call her name back, but my overworked lungs send a sharp surge of pain in protest, setting my chest on fire .. I Instead opt to run towards where her voice is coming from.\_

\_He's still on my tail like a ruthless shadow, forcing me to push myself harder which I dutifully do, now that I'm fueled by hope as well as fear. Jane is here!\_

\_I gather what remained of my strength and put it to use. I run even faster, but Something is off. I can feel it in my guts as Jane would say. The closer I get, the faintest her voice becomes. It doesn't make any sense! Her fading shouts, now, are making me more lost and lonely than I was before. I'm on my own again.\_

**\*\*Please Jane, find me!!\*\***\_

\_I keep pleading over and over in my head, willing my plea to reach, telepathically, Jane's mind. I know there is no such a thing, but my rational self is nowhere to be found. At this moment, I'm ruled by desperation and sheer terror.\_

\_I look behind me for a second and suddenly I'm hugging the ground! I must have tripped over something. I knew it was a terrible idea. Why I looked back?\_

**\*\*Stupid Maura.. Stupid!!\*\***\_

\_I can hear him coming closer, and closer. The stillness of the night emphasizes the hollow sound of his footsteps that echoes in my head

like a countdown to my very ending. The dim moonlight "peeking from behind the clouds- gives his advancing figure a shadowy appearance, which did nothing to lessen the intensity of the trepidation that fills every cell in my body.\_

\_I want to rise to my feet and run, but my body is having none of it. I can't move it like it's been glued to the ground. I'm paralyzed by exhaustion and fear.\_

\_\*\*No ! Please God no!"\*\*\_

\_I cry and pray to a deity I don't even believe in, knowing deep down it's all falling on deaf ears.\_

\_He keeps his advance undisrupted, and all of a sudden I feel betrayed by everything; God, my own body, whatever thing I tripped over, the moon that is shyly hiding behind the clouds and the stars that didn't show up tonight to light up the path, people in the safety of their homes, the world that is not coming to end over my predicament.. Jane who takes too long to find me! Her voice now sounds like it's coming from a memory or a dream. Or does it sound like a whisper?!\_

\_I can feel him hovering over my shaken body, stripping me out of control. I swallow hard and close my eyes shut. Tears of helplessness start to fall down my cheeks, only to end their short lives on the edge my lips. My weakness tastes like salt, bitterness and shame.\_

\_\*\*Come on, get up Maura! Fight.. \*\*\_

\_A small voice encourages in my head.\_

\_\*\*You run because You CAN'T FIGHT moron, remember? You, weak, disgusting, pathetic woman !\*\*\_

\_An angry voice shouts back.\_

\_The two keep their shouting match going on in my head, and I feel like I'm going insane. At least they're working as distraction from what "I know- is about to occur.\_

\_I have an odd feeling of tedious familiarity about the whole situation. like a déjà vu or an out-of-body experience of sort . I can see what's happening without actually seeing it; he is hovering over my body taking advantage of my state of weakness. I see the whole thing but I feel nothing. I know somehow I should feel something; The pain for instance.. the weight of his body atop mine.. the callus of his large hands pinning me down by my wrists.. the drops of his perspiration running down my face.. I should feel something but I simply don't, as though all the images are from a distant memory. Am I numb? Am I dead? Is any of this real? It's all too confusing to tell which is which.\_

\_I open my eyes to look at my nightmare. Instead of the monster's eyes, I find a set of beautiful dark brown ones mirroring a sight of a broken soul inside. I know those sad eyes; I love them. It's Jane's..\_

\_\*\*Oh God, No! It's too late!\*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p>I woke with a start, panting and shaking from head to toes, with hot tears falling freely down my face. It had been a while since I had this particular awful dream. My usual nightmares were more of flashbacks than the products of my unforgiving subconscious. They would usually end with me sobbing myself to consciousness. A prolonged shower and a quick visit to James's room would, usually, be enough to help me restore my peace of mind.<p>

In the case of this dream, however, there wasn't much to do in order to help me forget. The nightmare stays with me all the day along, taunting me to analyze every second of it in hope to decipher its meaning. The days afterwards were never the best. Not for me, nor for the unlucky people around.

Thinking about my nights terrors as 'usual occurrences' caused a humorless, bitter laugh to leave my mouth. One would think after all these years, my nocturnal life would be more peaceful by now, but that wasn't the case. My therapist says I'm the one hindering my own progress by refusing to let go; pinning over the past like a ghost with an unfinished business on the earth. \_How scientific of him!\_

After few minutes in bed convincing myself that it was just a dream, I decided to move my body to taste my theory, letting a small sigh of relief when my limbs obeyed. I turned my head to look at the digital clock on the night stand. It was 04:05 am; an hour before my alarm usually goes off.

I must have fallen asleep at some point while listening to the first of Jane's stories. I decided to give it a try after sleep chose to get more elusive than usual. I'd been out for less than three hours, which I would have to make do with, since there was no getting back to sleep. I discovered during the past few years that a restful night, for me, had become too much to ask for; Sleep hadn't been my ally since that dreadful night.

I moved my sweaty mess out of bed, toward the in-suite bathroom to take a shower, before it was time to make few calls. One of them to take a day off. Calling in sick after the night I just had would be the best course of action..

I was almost finished stripping out of my nightgown, when I caught my reflection in the mirror above the sink. The familiar wreck "that particular nightmare always leaves in its wake- was starting back at me.

There was the woman who left Boston six years ago, with nothing but a suitcase and a life growing inside her violated body and lifeless heart.

There was the wife who broke more of her marital vows than she managed to keep.

There was the coward who fled her home in the wee hours, leaving a letter behind along with more broken hearts than she cares to admit.

There was the stranger who spent hours and hours sitting on the park bench like a statue, dwelling in the past; trapped inside her overactive memory.

There was the broken woman I decided to bury somewhere in the back of my mind, the moment I held James in my arms for the first time.

There was the 'me' that emerges from my subconscious after every nightmare, trying to take control.

It took a moment to get her back to whatever part of my mind she crawled out from. It's a fight I win every time, since losing is not an option. I have a son who needs me. I have a promise to keep.

\_No one can break you unless you let them. Promise to never give anyone that kind of power over you!\_

Jane's words were still ringing in my ears since the day I broke down after Dennis Rockman nearly ended my life. I broke the promise once before, and I wasn't about to make it twice.

I looked at the mirror once again, and this time I had to smile at the sight of the strong-willed woman that greeted my eyes. Facing nightmares almost every night requires a great amount of strength, I must admit.

Standing there, wearing nothing but a smile, I found my admiration for my beautiful wife (or is it ex-wife?) reaching a new level. Jane had more than her fair share of encounters with evil, but she had never allowed the monsters's nightly, unwanted visits to break her or manipulate her psyche. She succeeded to beat them almost every time. And in the rare nights when it all became too much, I was there to hold her until her boogeyman admits defeat. Does the terrors she witnesses on daily basis still disrupt her sleep? Does she allow \_her wife\_ to hold her as she used to do with me?

\_Don't go there Maura.. Don't think about it\_. I caught myself just in time, pushing my perspiration-covered body under the hot water hoping against hope, it would be enough -this time- to wash the bad dream and the painful memories away.

I stood in the stall with my eyes closed, enjoying the warmth of the water enveloping me, while letting my mind drift to the first chapter of 'Little Maura' I was listening to, until Jane's heavenly voice lulled me to sleep.

"\_Hey guys, ready to start the story?\_" The recording started with jane's voice sounding softer than I've ever heard before, carrying a childish enthusiasm that reminded me of James's.

"\_YES\_" came the answer in unison from her equally excited audience.

"\_Okay than, here we go..\_"

\* \* \*

><p><em> Once upon a time, in small town called 'Snobsville', there was a little girl, about a couple of years older than you are. Her

name was Maura.<em>

\_With a smooth, oval face adorned with a faint powder of cute freckles on the cheeks, a set of big beautiful eyes that shine with a never-ending curiosity, and honey-blonde hair falling down her shoulder like a cascade of silk, Little Maura was one of the most beautiful girls in the town, if not in the world!\_

\_However, every time she looked at herself in the mirror, all she could see is a reflection of a lonely, friendless girl. None of the town kids wanted to befriend her; some were intimidated by her intelligence, others were jealous of her beauty, and the rest were mean to her just because they couldn't be like her. They bullied her and called her names that caused more than a few tears to fall from her beautiful eyes. Things were not much better with adults. You see, Little Maura was a real genius and an avid reader, she read a lot of books, and sometimes her vast knowledge puts some of her parents' friends in very embarrassing situations; having a small child questioning the accuracy of your informations, was not something to be thrilled about, in a town when everything is about appearances and the public image. which means people there cared about what others think of them more than anything else. That's why they found it extremely annoying when Little Maura, without intending, embarrasses them by correcting their inaccuracies; the word means things that are incorrect. They all, adult and children, were secretly envious of her because she was different.\_

\_Her adoptive parents loved her dearly, but much like everyone in 'Snobsville', they had a hard time trying to understand her. Sometimes, they wished she was more like her peers. They wished she was 'normal'. And let me tell you this my dear little friends, 'normal' is overrated. Normal means in this case 'average', and Little Maura was anything but. Our lovely girl was very special; she had yet to know.\_

\_Eventually, they gave up trying, and decided to leave their only child to her own devices thinking it was for her best. They weren't bad people, neither was the majority the town, for that matter. They just weren't used to deal with differences. They were all alike; they behave in the same way, talk in the same manner, dress in the same fashion.. they even share the same dreams and set the same goals for the future.. That's why Maura stood out, among them, like a sore thumb.\_

\_Like a I said before, Maura's parents loved her so much, but unfortunately they didn't know how to show her.. We all know that, but poor little Maura didn't. She spent countless night in the company of her tears, trying to understand why no one wants to be around her? Why no one loves her? What was so wrong with her that she was always left out like she doesn't belong? The honey-blonde girl, like every person in this world, yearned to be loved as she, deep down, knew she deserved. She craved the feeling of belonging. She wished for a friend. And as we all know, sometimes, wishes can come true.\_

\_One morning, Little Maura woke up at dawn as she usually do to enjoy the sunrise. Yes, our favorite girl was an early bird, unlike myself.. I'm not much of a morning person, and by the look of it, neither are you! Anyway, back to the story.\_

\_When Little Maura rose from her comfortable bed that morning, she sensed the presence of someone in her room. Her parents had never entered her space without knocking, and it was too early for the maid to start tidying up. She looked around only to find a little dark-haired girl around her age standing in farther corner of the room, her face mirroring the confusion that showed on Maura's features.\_

"\*\*Who are you? And what are you doing here?\*\*\_" Maura asked the intruder. Oddly enough, she didn't feel scared or threatened by the other girl; only curious. Of course this in the story. In the reality, if you as much as caught the whiff of a stranger in you room I want you to scream as loud as your vocal cords would allow, than run. Understood? Now lets go back to the story.\_

\_The dark-haired stranger just stood there, not answering.\_

"\*\*Why are you not answering? How did you get in here? Are you one of the maid's daughters?\*\*\_"\_

\_No word came out of the other girl's mouth. Maura started to get irritated.\_

"\*\*If you refuse to talk to me, I'm sure my father would want to know about the intruder who slipped into his house without permission!\*\*\_" Maura almost instantly started to feel sorry for being so harsh with the confused-looking girl.\_

"\*\*I'm not scared of you or your father. You're as intimidating as a small puppy.. I just don't know how to answer your stupid questions.\*\*\_" Said the other girl angrily.\_

"\*\*I'm not as intimidating as a puppy!\*\*\_" Little Maura felt offended. "\_\*\*Wait.. How do you mean you don't know how to answer?!\*\*\_"\_

"\*\*I.. I just don't know who am I, where I came from and what I'm doing here.. I can't remember anything!\*\*\_" The other girl, who stood slightly taller than Maura, sounded scared and lost and somehow small..\_

"\*\*Oh.. You're probably suffering from amnesia!\*\*\_" Stated Little Maura, feeling sorry for other girl.\_

"\*\*Amni..What\*\*\_" Asked the girl bewildered, which means perplexed or baffled, which means confused. I like to use big words because I'm an adult; thus knowing more words than you do.. Well, at least I hope that's the case!\_

\_Anyway, I'm just kidding about the big words thing, but Little Maura liked to use them. Not to show off her vast vocabulary or anything. It was just how she speaks.\_

"\*\*Amnesia.. It means a partial or total loss of memory caused by brain damage, disease, or psychological trauma\*\*\_" explained Little Maura simply, as though it was a common knowledge.\_

"\*\*Yeah, right.. Um, I guess I have this amnesia thing\*\*\_" said the taller girl unsurely, making her way to sit on the edge of the bed. Little Maura joined her without a second thought.\_

\_Silence enveloped the room for a few minutes before Maura tilted her head slightly to the right and said:\_

"\*\*Did you know that amnesia can also be caused temporarily by the use of various hypnotic drugs. There is specific type of amnesia called 'Drug-induced amnesia' in which they intentionally inject the patient with an amnesiac drug to help them forget surgery or medical procedures.. There are other types of amnesia such as 'Anterograde amnesia' and 'Retrograde amnesia'.. But the most common is 'Post-traumatic amnesia' which is generally caused by

â€"\*\_"

\_Little Maura had to put an end to her 'facts-spouting' after seeing the other girl's shocked face.\_

"\*\*Oh I'm sorry, you must be thinking I'm weird. I'm not.. Or maybe I am. I.. I just read a lot. Sometimes I tend to over-share facts about the new things I learnt. And now you think I'm boring! Great\*\*\_"

Maura put her hands in her lap after mumbling the last few words, her eyes falling to her feet in embarrassment. \_

"\*\*What? No! Why would I think that?\*\_"

Exclaimed the other girl confused. She reached to lift Maura's face by the chin to look at her in the eye before resuming talking " \_\*\*hey, look at me.. Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed of who you are. I know we just met but believe me when I say you are not weird. Well maybe just little, but it's good kind of weird. I like it. And you are certainly not boring.. I mean how could you be if you always walk around spouting facts about new stuff? Right?.. You must be really smart!\*\_"

she added with a smile.\_

"\*\*Actually, I'm a genius\*\*\_" replied Maura matter-of-factly.\_

"\*\*A very humble one too\*\*\_" commented the other girl sarcastically, chuckling at Maura's endearing quirks. " \_\*\*that's cool\*\*\_"

"\*\*Really\*\*\_?" The blonde-haired girl asked in disbelief.\_

"\*\*Yeah.. Why do you sound so surprised?\*\_"

" \*\*Maybe because you are the first person to ever describe me as cool. Kids at my school think I'm boring, the older people in town find me annoying. Even my parents think I'm not normal because I don't have friends and I spend all my free time alone with books\*\*\_"

answered Little Maura with a sad tone.\_

"\*\*That's.. That's so mean! For what it's worth, I think you're.. Umm.. I'm not good with words like you but I'll go with 'different'.. I think you're different and interesting and I like you the way you are.. Don't let them change you..\*\*\_"

The sincerity carried by the words was so touching it caused Maura's eyes to water.\_

"\*\*Thank you\*\*\_" came her voice thick with emotions.\_

"\*\*You're welcome.. Umm maybe we can be friends, you know.. I mean if you want to\*\*\_"

The black-haired girl stuttered, suddenly feeling nervous. What if the blonde didn't like her?\_



"\*\*I would love to.. You seem very nice\*\*\_" gushed little Maura, beaming from ear to ear.\_

"\*\*Yes, I am\*\*\_" the other girl said smugly, setting them both roaring with laughter.\_

\_After they sobered, the two girls sat there silently for a while thinking about the dark-haired girl's situation.\_

"\*\*What I'm gonna do now?\*\*\_" Asked the troubled kid feeling at lost.\_

"\*\*Well.. We wait until my parent wake up and ask them\*\*\_" answer Maura.\_

"\*\*Oh I don't think that will help. I have been in this house since last night. I tried to get the intention of people downstairs, but they kept ignoring me like I'm invisible or something! In fact, I wasn't sure you were able to see me until you started talking.. Thank God for that.. I hate being ignored\*\*\_" The girl was clearly upset.\_

"\*\*Don't be silly, you're are not invisible.. I can see you\*\*\_" the shorter girl laughed at the absurdity of her new friend's words, before turning her head to look at the clock hanging on the wall behind her back. She extended her hand to take the other girl's."\_\*\*Come on, let go downstairs. My parents would be up by now\*\*\_" .\_

\_In the dining-room downstairs, little Maura found her parents enjoying their morning coffee while reading the newspaper as they usually do.\_

"\*\*Good morning, father.. Good morning, mother\*\*\_" Maura greeted her parent politely. She was always a very well-mannered girl.\_

"\*\*Good morning darling\*\*\_" her parents greeted back in unison not taking their eyes from whatever articles held their attention.\_

\_Maura stood there, awkwardly, for a moment thinking about how to approach the subject. She stole a glance at the girl standing, or rather to say, hiding behind her, before she cleared her throat.\_

"\*\*Mother, father.. When I woke up this morning I found a girl in my room..She doesn't remember anything about herself, neither does she know how she ended up here.. I told her maybe you can help her\*\*\_" said the blonde hopefully, with the steadiest voice she could manage, giving her friend a small smile.\_

\_His daughter's words turned Richard's attention to her direction.\_

"\*\*What! How she entered the house unnoticed? And where is she now?\*\*\_" He sounded alarmed and a bit angry.\_

" \*\*she's right here father\*\*\_" she turned to face her friend. "\_\*\*come on, don't be scared.. They don't bite\*\*\_" she whispered teasingly, to put the other girl at ease.\_

\_Richard and his wife Charlotte looked at each other with eyes full of worry after witnessing their daughter standing there talking to herself! They share a nod indicated that Charlotte was the one in charge of the situation. The woman turned to face her daughter while her husband went back to his reading relieved that there was no intruder in his house.\_

"\*\*Are you feeling unwell, my dear?\*\*"\_ Charlotte asked cautiously.\_

"\*\*No mother, I'm fine.. Why?\*\*-\_" Maura answered feeling confused by her mother question and hurt by her father dismissal.\_

"\*\*you might be as well, standing there talking to yourself!\*\*"-\_"

"\*\*I'm not talking to myself.. Im talking to my friend here, see?\*\*-\_" Replied the daughter defensively.\_

\_Charlotte let a sigh of exasperation and run her hands over her face, trying to think about the best course of action to deal with her daughter's imaginary friend.\_

"\*\*Darling, look at me.. There is no others in the room except for the three of us\*\*-\_" said the worried mother softly.\_

"\*\*But mother..\*\*-\_" Maura couldn't believe her ears. Why her parent can't see her friend? She is right in front of them!\_

"\*\*No buts child! I need you to quit this nonsense and retreat to your room to dress properly and join us for breakfast.\*\*"-\_ Charlotte cut her daughter off sternly, leaving no room for discussion.\_

"\*\*Yes mother\*\*-\_" with that, a teary-eyed Maura returned to her room tailed by the other girl.\_

\_As soon as the girls entered the room, little Maura collapsed on her bed crying her eyes out. Cry one's eyes out means to cry so hard and for long period of time.\_

\_The other girl stood in the middle of the room, awkwardly, at lost of what to do. Should she console her distressed friend or should she just leave? How to do so if she chose the former? And where to go if she opted the latter?\_

\_Walking away from the door, the invisible girl chose to be there for the blonde, like a real friend ought to do.\_

"\*\*Hey there.. Are you okay\*\*-\_" She asked softening her voice while approaching the bed with slow pace.\_

"\*\*Of course I'm not! My first real friend turned out to be imaginary\*\*-\_" shouted Little Maura, mourning the loss of the friend she had for less than an hour! Mourn means feeling or showing great sadness about the loss of someone or something.\_

"\*\*Hey! I'm so not imaginary, thank you very much\*\*-\_" replied the said friend, faking offense.\_

"\*\*Yes you are.. No one can see you except me, because you came out of my imagination\*\*\_" countered Maura stubbornly.\_

\_The other girl, herself, was nothing but stubborn as well. In fact, if she had a first and last names, I would have dared to say 'stubborn' was her middle one. She sat next to her distraught friend thinking about a way to prove that she is real and not just a product of her friend's imagination. Long minutes passed in complete silence except for the muffled sounds coming from the crying girl, until the taller kid came up with an idea.\_

\_She moved her hand to push her friend's honey-blond strands away from her soaked face and started wiping the tears away.\_

"\*\*Can\*\* \*\*you feel my touch?\*\*"\_ Asked the dark haired girl.\_

"\*\*Yes\*\*\_" Little Maura answered sounding surprised. "\_\*\*It feels like it's coming from a dream though. I don't understand\*\*\_"\_

"\*\*Well, neither do I, but the point is if you can feel my touch that means I'm not imaginary. I don't know a lot of things about myself but believe me when I say I'm real and very much alive, in case you started wondering if I'm a ghost\*\*\_" The other girl finished with joke earning a small laugh from her friend.\_

"\*\*Okay, you made a good point there.. you're not imaginary but no one can see you except myself.. I'm really having a hard time trying to understand but I believe you. So what now?\*\*"

"\*\*Umm.. I stay with you here since no one can see me, and wait until I return to my body\*\*\_" suggested the other girl hopefully  
.\_

"\*\*Return to you body?! What are you exactly?\*\*\_" Asked Maura curiously.\_

"\*\*I don't know.. How about 'I'm your friend'\*\*\_" her new roommate answered with a gentle smile, and our Maura couldn't help but smile back.\_

\_The silence that settled over their heads, this time, was a comfortable one. The girls were just content to sit there and think about how their lives was going to change now that there had each other. until the clock indicated it was time for Little Maura to get ready for the day.\_

\_After dressing 'properly' as her mother instructed, Little Maura joined her friend who was standing by the window, taking in the breathtaking scenery displayed outside. She stood there for a moment before she tilted her head slightly to the right and said:\_

"\*\*Did you know that 65% of children our age report they have had an imaginary friend at some point in their lives?\*\*\_" Asked little Maura out of the blue.\_

"\*\*Hey! You said you believed me!\*\*\_" The brunette exclaimed, punching Maura's shoulder playfully.\_

"\*\*I do. I just thought it was an interesting fact you would want to know about. And you really should punch harder if you want to make it feel more than a feather caress, miss Ghost\*\*\_" teased Maura, chuckling at her own joke.\_

"\*\*Oh look at you, miss humor.\*\*\_" Miss Ghost teased back before she continued. "\_\*\*You know.. We really need to find me a temporary nameâ€¦| Now come to think of it, I just realized I don't know your name either!\*\*\_"\_

"\*\*Oh where are my manners! My name is Maura.. What do you want me to call you?\*\*\_"\_

"\*\*Maura.. Mm.. A beautiful name.. Well, nice to meet you Maura. And you can call me whatever you want\*\*\_" the unnamed girl offered her hand, which Maura took gladly to shake. The contact, once again, didn't feel like a physical one ought to make you feel. It was like a contact of souls. It was all surreal, and yet it felt more real than anything ever did before.\_

"\*\*In that case, I once had this doll I loved so much named Allison.. It was my only friend until one of my classmates ripped its head off because I refused to help him to cheat in the exams\*\*\_" Maura recounted, feeling sad all of a sudden.\_

"\*\*Oh that's awful! I wish I was there with you, I would have stopped him, or punch him on the face! Anyway.. Allison sounds cool.. You call me Alice and I'll call you.. Um.. Maur.. Maur or less\*\*\_" it was Alice's turn to laugh uncontrollably at her silly joke this time.\_

"\*\*You're not as funny as you think you are Alice.\*\*\_" Lille Maura deadpanned, rolling her eyes at her friend. In the inside, however, she was flying with happiness over her very first nickname.\_

"\*\*We both know I'm the funny one here. And you, my dear, are the brainy.. Come on, let's go have breakfast before it's time to go to school\*\*\_" said Alice, pushing Maura out of the room, causing to giggle. Alice's touch feels like tickles.\_

"\*\*Humph.. Don't remind me. The kids in there are going to have a field day when they know about you\*\*\_" whined Maura dreading the reaction of her bullies.\_

"\*\*Don't worry Maur.. We will deal with them together\*\*\_" assured Alice with a smile.\_

"\*\*Really? You're going with me?\*\*\_" Asked a very excited Maura.\_

"\*\*of course silly.. That's what friends do.. They stick together. Besides, I rather spent the day at school with you than stay here and be treated like a ghost\*\*\_" she said rolling her eyes.\_

"\*\*Well, You are a ghost\*\*\_" pointed Maura teasingly.\_

"\*\*I'm not!\*\*\_" Objected Alice.\_

"\*\*Yes, you too\*\*\_"\_

"\*\*I'm so not\*\*\_"\_

\* \* \*

><p><em> Darn! Jane did it again<em>. It was all I could think about when I found myself standing under the cold water after the story, in my head, came to end. Her hypnotic voice took me somewhere between the consciousness and dreamland, leaving me engrossed in the story and unaware of nothing but.

After I toweled my body dry and put some clothes on, I was left with so much time to analyze the whole thing.

\_Why would Jane tell her son stories about me, after what I'd done to her? Does her wife know who 'Little Maura' really was? Why Alice is the sidekick and not Jane herself?\_

\_Why her voice softened every time she said my name? Why she pictured me in the story like she loves me still? \_

\_Why it all sounded like a dream she seeks refuge in, when reality turns too harsh to dwell in? Why would Jane make me her dream?!\_

\_A bombshell of questions\_, that's what jane had become to me. I was dying for answers and terrified to the bone. Our reunion, at that point, was inevitable; I knew that much. The mere thought of seeing her again filled me with dread, and sent my heart palpating from excitement, in the same time.\_A roller-coaster of emotions\_, that's what she was too.

I decided, after few minutes of staring into space, to pick up the story from where I left it last night, and maybe start the next.

"\_And that's, my dears, how Little Maura and Alice became best friends. Now If any of you have any questions, go ahead but introduce yourself first\_" offered Jane.

"\_Hey, my name is Zola.. I was wondering if Little Maura's parents didn't know how to love her because she was adopted. I'm adopted too\_" came Zola's voice carrying a very tricky question, I found myself holding my breath in anticipation.

"\_Nice to meet you Zola.. You have a very beautiful name.. Almost as beautiful as you are\_" praised Jane sweetly. \_That's my sweet wife! I found myself gushing in my head.

"\_let's answer your very interesting question. The fact that Our Little Maura was adopted has nothing to do with it. I think even if she was their biological daughter, they still would have difficulties connecting with her. Because some of us, need to learn how to express their feelings and show their affections, which it was the case of Richard and Charlotte. Keep following the progress of the story to know how that will happen.\_

\_Now, let's talk about being adopted. When someone adopt a kid, that means they want him or her in their life, to be their child. They don't have to; they choose to. Which is the utmost sort of love. And if we think about being adopted as being chosen, we are all somehow

adopted!\_

\_Let me explain. Some of us were planned, which means their parents planned to have them. Others were not planned, but their parents chose to keep them. And some, like you and Maura and lot of people out there, were chosen after their birth.\_

\_Trust me kids, it doesn't matter how you were made, or how you came to you their lives; your parents loves you so so much, especially when you behave\_."

Jane's answer was so touching it caused my eyes to tear with emotions and my hearts to swell with pride. I was so proud of how beautifully she put her thoughts into words, but \_why it felt like she was addressing the last words especially to James?!\_

"\_My name is James and I have a question: Why did you name the character 'Maura'\_" I heard my son inquire curiously taking me aback along with Jane who kept quiet for a moment thinking about the answer, I presumed.

"\_Well James.. Um.. Because I had a special person in my life whose name was Maura\_" was that longing I heard in her voice?

"\_You mean 'Little Maura' is real\_" Gaspd a little boy I didn't recognize his voice.

"\_What I said about introducing yourselves before the question?" Reminded Jane gently.

"\_But you know my name mammy jay\_" Whined the boy named Jayden, I concluded.

"\_Yes I do, but they don't\_" pointed Jane with a hint of amusement in her tone.

"\_Oh right, sorry.. I'm Jayden but you can call me Little Jay.. Now can you answer me please: is 'Little Maura' real\_" Little Jay is clearly an impatient little man.

"\_Well, our beloved character and my..um.. My Maura have a lot in common. So, yes.. to some point 'Little Maura' is real\_" I felt my heart clenched slightly when she referred to me as hers.

"\_Wow\_" the kids gasped in awe.

"\_Where is she now, your Maura ?.. Oh I'm Sofia by the way\_" of course Arizona's daughter would be the one asking the unanswerable question. Like mother, like daughter!

"\_Um.. Ok kids I think that will be all for the day, I have to go.. It was nice to meet you Sofy.. You too Zu.. Mini Jay as well.. Yes I'm talking about you James.. And for the rest I'm looking forward to know you names tomorrow.. Be good to your parents and to each other.. Now come here give me a goodbye hug..\_" That was how Jane managed to dodge the bullet. Despite the forced excitement, I could hear the pain hiding in her tired voice. \_Did it still hurt?\_

Guilt. I knew my constant companion would make its appearance at some point soon. Its presence felt suffocating on my chest. The whole

thing was still weighting heavily on my conscience. I'd never wanted to hurt Jane. I loved her; I still do, but what choice did I really have ?

"Mama.. You're still listening to 'Little Maura'?! " James's sleep laden voice startled me out of my deep thoughts.

I look toward the door to see my disheveled-looking son making his way to join me in bed.

"Good morning to you too sweetheart.. And yes I sill am.. Did you sleep well?"

" yes mama and good morning.. So, did you like the story?" Asked James too eagerly, he forgot to ask me about my night, not that I would tell him the truth if he asked anyway.

"Well, it's interesting and yes I liked it.. Does Jane.. I mean Big Jay always discuss it with you afterwards?"

"Yes.. She answers our questions and help us understand the big words.. And asks us about what we learnt from the story.."

Listening to my son talking lengthily about how great Jane was, was something I had never thought I would live to wetness. I had dared, in occasions, to fantasize about the three of us being a happy little family, but never, in my wildest dreams, believed they would actually meet each other, let alone spend time together. Now, my baby boy was completely in love with Jane. It all felt so surreal.

"You like her, don't you?" I found myself asking, with a sad smile.

"Of course mama.. She's awesome!" Jane's new big fan said grinning from ear to ear..

\_Yes, she is.\_

I cradled his head in my chest, and planted a kiss on the crown of his head while a lone tear made its agreement known by falling down my face..

\_If only I fought harder..\_

\_If only I didn't run.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Yeah, I know.. This chapter is taller a heavier than its writer! I was about to put into two chapters but after reading the whole thing I opted to posted as one.. Separated, the stories didn't have the same impact.. What you think?<strong>

End  
file.